

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the application is requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Claims 1, 12 and 13 have been amended to correct formal matters. Claims 26, 37 and 38 are allowed and claims 1-7, 28-31, 33, 39 and 42-49 include allowable subject matter. Claims 1-7, 12-26, 28-31, 33, 34, 36-39 and 42-49 are pending in the application.

§112 Rejections

Claims 1-7, 12-20 and 34 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Claim 1, 12 and 13 have been amended to address the issues identified by the Examiner and are now definite. As to claim 34, Applicant submits that "primary clutch" as recited in the second to the last line of that claim has proper antecedent basis provided at the third to the last line of claim 34. Therefore, claim 34 is also definite.

§ 103 Rejections

Claims 21-25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bombardier, U.S. 3698,497 in view of Showalter, U.S. 5,833,566. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Bombardier discloses a snowmobile with a continuously variable transmission assembly, but fails to disclose or suggest a planetary gear system for use with a snowmobile. Showalter discloses a speed reduction assembly with full disconnect for an automobile transfer case. The speed reduction assembly includes a double disconnect mechanism that provides full decoupling of the speed reduction assembly from the power path when certain gear ratios are selected. There is no disclosure or suggestion by either Showalter or Bombardier concerning application of a planetary gear system to a snowmobile, or that there is a need in a snowmobile for the benefits provided by a planetary gear system. Showalter and Bombardier also fail to disclose or suggest how the complex speed reduction assembly disclosed by Showalter could be modified or otherwise applied to the specialized transmission system of a snowmobile. Thus, Applicants submit that there is no motivation to combine the snowmobile of Bombardier with the complex speed reduction system disclosed by Showalter, and further submit that there is no suggestion in either Bombardier or Showalter of applying a planetary gear system to a snowmobile. Without

such a showing of motivation or suggestion, Applicants submit that there is no prima facie showing of obviousness by the rejection and that the rejection sets forth a mere hindsight analysis. Therefore, Applicants submit that Bombardier and Showalter fail to disclose or suggest every limitation of claims 21-25.

Claim 36 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Bombardier in view of Avramidis, U.S. 3,884,097. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

As discussed above, Bombardier fails to disclose or suggest a planetary gear system. Avramidis discloses a planetary gear system that includes a sun gear 150 mounted on an output/input shaft 32, planetary gears 152 mounted in a planetary gear carrier 174, and a hollow shaft 190 to which an output sprocket 156 is mounted. Shaft 190 is secured to planetary gear carrier 174 and further secured to ring gear carrier 180 in some configurations. Thus, shaft 32 might be considered for the sake of argument generally equivalent to the presently claimed first shaft (to the extent it is coupled to the sun gear) and shaft 190 might be considered generally equivalent to the second shaft (to the extent it is coupled to the planetary gears) of claim 36. Avramidis further discloses a first centrifugal clutch 28, a second centrifugal clutch 60, and an overrunning clutch 94 that rotate about the axis of respective shafts 32, 26, 26.

Avramidis also discloses a specific configuration for transfer of power from an engine 14 to a track 16 through an automatically shiftable stage 18 (includes clutches 28, 60, 94) and a manually shiftable stage 20 (includes the planetary gear system). The engine 14 rotates input shaft 24, which actuates some combination of clutches 28, 60, 94 to rotate shaft 34, thereby rotating sun gear 150. Sun gear 150 causes rotation of either or both of planetary gears 152 and ring gear 154 to rotate output shaft 190, which then rotates sprocket 156 and chain 158 to power track 16. There is no disclosure or suggestion by Avramidis of rearranging these features (clutches 28, 60, 94, shafts 32, 190, gears 150, 152, 154, and sprocket/chain 156, 158) in a different order or reversing the direction of power transfer to accomplish the same function of transferring power from engine 12 to track 16. Thus, because the clutches 28, 60, 94 are positioned between the input shaft 24 and the sun gear 150 and are not positioned between the planetary gears 152 and the track 16, Avramidis fails to disclose or suggest "said second shaft means driving said endless drive track through said primary clutch and said secondary clutch," as

required by claim 36. Applicants submit that Bombardier and Avrimidis fail to disclose or suggest every limitation of claim 36.

In view of the above, Applicants request reconsideration of the application in form of a Notice of Allowance. If a phone conference would be helpful in resolving any issues related to this matter, please contact Applicants' attorney below at 612.371.5387.

Respectfully submitted,

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